

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Two data communication platforms are operating as a combination. In one embodiment, a data signal formatted according to a data communication protocol is received at a first data communication platform. The first data communication platform operates to determine if the data communication protocol is supported by the first data communication platform. If it is determined that the data communication protocol is supported by the first data communication platform, the first data communication platform indicates to a second data communication platform to receive the data signal at a by-pass path of a filter engine. As a result, fast data signal communication capabilities of protocols developed and implemented as ASICs are combined with the flexibility in developing and adding new protocols implemented as software needed by more complex networked computer devices. In one embodiment, a second data signal formatted according to a second data communication protocol is received at the first data communication platform. The first data communication platform operates to determine if the second data communication protocol is supported by the second data communication platform. If it is determined that the data communication protocol is supported by the second data communication platform, the first data communication platform indicates to the second communication platform to receive the data signal at a filter engine path of the filter engine.